

Economic Development

Nothing calls us to think regionally more than our economic well-being.



A Regional Economic Perspective... Municipal boundaries fade from view when we consider the driving forces of our economy:

- the job market is regional - 24% of our workers commute out-of-county;
- Metro-North makes express connections to and from New York City;
- regional and interstate highways connect across the nation;
- most business relocations are within the New York Metropolitan region;
- regional media sources expand our sphere of economic exchange;
- nearby colleges serve a national and even international demand; and
- state services (e.g., environmental protection, economic development, transportation, and parks) are organized on a regional basis.

The Hudson Valley is not only a natural system of scenic beauty, it is also part of a vibrant regional economy. Dutchess County already benefits from regional cooperation; Hudson Valley tourism promotion, joint marketing of agricultural products, and using Economic Development Zone incentives to attract businesses have all been successful strategies. Establishing common policies under the Greenway banner is a strong step toward broader programs of cooperation that will encourage new businesses and expand existing businesses and industries. Even with the increasing strength of the regional economy, creating good-paying jobs close to home is still a high priority.

Strategies to build local economies must be comprehensive, going far beyond a focus on new sources of property taxes. Infrastructure investment, good school systems, work force training, Main Street revitalization programs, and streamlined approval processes are examples of comprehensive public policies that attract economic development. **Localities should view each other as economic partners, not competitors, feeling confident that balanced, high quality regional growth will also provide long-term strength to the local tax and employment base.**

The Economics of Place... Dutchess County is a place people care about, full of historic traditions and prospects for the future. The Greenway Compact Program recognizes the design of our community as an essential economic variable. Quality economic development and quality design in our communities are complementary objectives. It is not necessary to choose one over the other.

There is no better indicator of investment potential than the local quality of life. Businesses looking to relocate and bond rating institutions explore how we educate our children, how we take care of our land, how we manage county and municipal budgets, how we invest in the future. Our pride of place is tested whenever we consider what makes Dutchess County a good investment, either for personal or business reasons.



The historic Bleachery complex in the center of Wappingers Falls has been converted into the Market Street Industrial Park with about 30 businesses employing over 200 workers.

The Economics of Sprawl...At the initial Greenway public workshops people identified sprawl (defined as spread-out, automobile dependent development) as a major concern. Sprawl is a development pattern with an unsustainable appetite for land. Many economic studies confirm that traditional, compact development forms are much less expensive for both home buyers and taxpayers than sprawling patterns. For example, a New Jersey analysis showed that planned growth uses only 40 percent as much land compared to sprawl, costs 75 percent as much for roads and 85 percent as much for utilities. Sprawling land patterns could add \$12,000-15,000 expense per house. A long-term Maine study showed that scattered development contributed to multi-million dollar increases for new school construction and busing, even as overall enrollment had substantially declined. Maryland estimates that continued sprawl would cost the state \$10 billion over the next 15 years, compared to more compact development.

In Dutchess County the most conspicuous costs of sprawl may be auto-related expenses, including number of vehicles needed per family, operating costs, crashes and injuries, local road budgets, time spent in traffic, corrective air quality measures, and lower residential property values along busy roads.

Human Scale



A few facts:

- From 1940 to 1990, the ratio of automobiles to population has tripled in the county.
- In the last 15 years countywide vehicle miles increased 52 percent, while population grew less than 10 percent.
- Almost 90 percent of us now use cars to get to work with 78 percent driving alone.
- Since over one-third of auto trips are for local errands, car use can be reduced by 18 to 25 percent in well planned, mixed use areas.

Auto Scale



Car dependency is directly related to zoning that spreads out housing and separates it from stores and job sites. Typical one- and two-acre subdivisions are almost entirely auto dependent and consume rural lands at an alarming rate. Towns often create large-lot zoning to discourage development and protect rural land. Yet our agricultural lands continue to decline - by 37 percent overall between 1950 and 1995. If land is just subdivided in standard three- and five-acre chunks, the loss of agricultural lands and rural character accelerates and the price of housing tends to increase beyond the levels of most local home buyers. Large-lot zoning can only slow the conversion of the rural landscape when coupled with conservation development that preserves a substantial percentage of open space.

From the Greenway perspective, it is wise economics to maintain strategic open space as an integral part of the development process. Studies consistently show that residential properties near trails and parks appreciate more than standard subdivisions. Good residential site plans that fit into the environment, with useful natural areas reserved, will add to both the enjoyment and property values of residents. Traditional compact development patterns, combined with current conservation techniques, have broad-scale economic benefits, by lowering development costs, providing more efficient public services, and thereby containing taxes.

Economic Benefits of Agriculture... Rural land that provides such a picturesque backdrop for our villages, highways, and new homes is actually the working landscape of Dutchess County's third largest industry. Productive farmland is irreplaceable – once farms have been developed, they are gone forever, along with the businesses that serve them. Also lost is an essential part of Dutchess County's beauty and character.

The County as a whole benefits when the scenic landscape that sustains our rural heritage is hayed, tilled, or pastured, and when development patterns respect the food-producing potential of our best land forever. **Encouraging economic development that supports the preservation and enhancement of agriculture is a primary goal of the Greenway Compact Program.**

With limited fanfare, agriculture contributes over \$100 million to Dutchess County's economy. Its 615 farms account for about 3,500 jobs. Also, Dutchess County's farm landscapes, farm stands, farmers' markets, and pick-your-own operations are the foundation of a growing rural tourism industry.



Farmland in Pleasant Valley in an area surrounded by strong development pressures.



Town of Red Hook

Dutchess County's agriculture industry provides an integral economic and cultural link to all the counties in the Hudson Valley region. Visitors to the Greenmarket in Manhattan's Union Square are familiar with our local farmers who take advantage of Dutchess County's proximity to the nation's largest consumer market, the New York City metropolitan area.

Every community has the legal authority to protect its most important resources and determine the extent and location of new development. Local regulations that support farming as a fundamental component of the region's economic prosperity also maintain Dutchess County's rural traditions.



D.C. Tourism Promotion Agency

The Hudson Valley Harvest Association promotes a regional "brand name" for local produce and processed foods identified by the Hudson Valley Harvest Logo.





D.C. Tourism Promotion Agency

Montgomery Place, the historic Livingston family estate in Red Hook, has extensive trails that will be integrated into the Greenway system.



The Webatuck Craft Village on the Ten Mile River in Dover features craft studios, galleries, and a country furniture showroom.

Benefits of Cultural Tourism...The Hudson Valley is designated as one of America's National Heritage Areas. Our rich history and beautiful landscapes provide a basis for national and international attention. We share an unbelievable diversity of historic sites, cultural attractions, riverfront properties, farmsteads, country roads, campuses, and parks – the singular places that make our area different from every other. It pays to protect them, and just as importantly, their surrounding settings.

When we preserve the context of our cultural resources and tourist attractions with well-considered development, we also enhance their value as economic assets. Building a partnership with the Hudson River Valley Greenway, communities will increase their accessibility to expertise and financial resources. Conserving their heritage also supports a \$334 million industry that employs over 9,000 people in more than 700 local tourism-related businesses.

Locally, communities can focus on the authenticity and quality of their attractions. The Dutchess County Heritage Tourism Council can assist the county's historic organizations in reaching their full potential as local research resources and tourism destinations that make connections between sites of related interest.

Regionally, the National Heritage Area Program, administered by the Greenway Conservancy and Council, is already focusing on coordinated improvements along the Town of Hyde Park's Historic Corridor and will be a source of federal funding for projects throughout the Hudson Valley. Marketing our region as a heritage destination can be combined with a concerted effort to create networks of complementary sites and to take advantage of our proximity to New York City, a receiving area for millions of visitors.



With private investments and targeted public funding, the east end of Main Street in Beacon has been transformed from abandoned buildings to an attractive district for antique shoppers from around the region.



The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College in the Town of Poughkeepsie offers an extensive permanent collection from Egyptian to contemporary art, as well as special exhibits.